4-9-19

**VALLEY LIFE: BRAKE LIGHT**

**THE YDSA AND VOLUNTEERS REPAIRED DRIVERS' BRAKE LIGHTS.**


# the VALLEY STAR

The Independent Student Newspaper of Los Angeles Valley College

**GALLERY: SUPER BLOOM**

**LONG-NEEDED RAINS BRING EXPLOSION OF COLOR TO HILLSIDE.**


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## Two associate degrees down

**Two psychology degrees will no longer be available next semester.**

GABRIEL ARIZON
CO-EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Valley College's Psychology Department is discontinuing its general psychology and developmental psychology associate of arts degrees in favor of the more popular general psychology AA-T.

In February, the Psychology Department filed two Program Discontinuance Forms to the Program Effectiveness and Planning Committee (PEPC), requesting that two of its associate degree programs be ceased. In a March 7 PEPC meeting, the forms were approved. This was due to the high demand for the general psychology AA-T and to make the process towards a degree more streamlined.

"An ongoing goal of the department is to ensure access to awards and transfer through clear pathways," one form stated. "This discontinuance makes the pathway to success via the remaining two psychology degrees ... clearer for students."

According to data from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, of the 100 psychology associate degrees awarded in the 2017-18 school year, 75 were AA-T, whereas 19 were the general psychology degree and two were from developmental psychology.

The AA-T has undergone a rapid growth since its inception in 2015-16, starting from 25 awards and jumping to 66 the year after. Conversely, the general psychology degree seems to have never gone above 25 in a single year, and no more than six developmental psychology degrees have been awarded since 2012. In fact, the latter went two years in a row without any being awarded.

Although two degree programs will be cut, no classes will be affected since all of them share many of the same course requirements. According to Christina Peter, PEPC chair and psychology professor, students who attended Valley before the program discontinuation and who will remain consistently enrolled retain the option to complete both degrees.

"By simplifying the degree offerings," Peter said, "the psychology department is making the pathway to transfer and careers in psychology easier and clearer without limiting the courses that are offered or the interests students pursue."

Besides the AA-T, the Psychology Department will also be keeping its social and personality psychology degree. There are no current plans to discontinue this degree, according to Peter, though it may be considered in the future if they observe a consist low interest in the award. The number of awards for that degree have remained in the single digits since 2012, according to the data from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

This is not the only change coming to Valley. Program Discontinuance Forms were also filed for Hebrew and Jewish Studies, citing low enrollment. Both programs will be replaced by a general Religious Studies and no classes will be cut.

# Death penalty losing public support

**A recent poll shows that many Californians align with Gov. Gavin Newsom in moving away from the death penalty.**

KIMBERLY LINARES
STAFF WRITER

SACRAMENTO BEE | RENEE C. BYER

DEATH PENALTY- Gov. Gavin Newsom announced a temporary ban on any further executions in California.

Even though it seemed like California was not too pleased with Gov. Gavin Newsom's decision of not executing death row inmates while in office, a poll says otherwise.

The Public Policy Institute of California poll found that Californians, by a 2-to-1 margin, support sentencing first-degree murderers to life in prison rather than the death penalty. This is an indication that Gov. Newsom's recent decision to temporarily prohibit the use of the death chamber at San Quentin, California and his long-term opposition against capital punishment might align with the public.

The findings of this poll could potentially revive efforts to abolish the death penalty completely in California. This will include a proposed constitutional amendment being considered in the state Legislature that could land on the 2020 ballot. Gov. Newsom already is considering prohibiting any new death sentences in local criminal cases.

"This is a case where public opinion continues to shift, and shift support away from the death penalty," said Mark Baldassare, the institute's president and chief executive.

The poll results found that 62 percent of Californians, in cases of first degree murder, favored a penalty of life imprisonment with absolutely no possibility of parole, compared with 31 percent who favored death sentences. Support for the death penalty has declined since 2000, when Californians were evenly divided on this issue, according to the institutions poll of that year.

However, the survey runs contrary to recent statewide votes on capital punishment. Both Proposition 62 and Proposition 66 are considered Death Penalty Procedure Initiatives and appeared on the November 2016 ballot as initiated state statutes. Prop. 66 and Prop. 62 were competing initiatives on the same topic, meaning that if both were approved by the majority of votes, the initiative receiving the most "yes" votes would win.

Proposition 66 prevailed, indicating that voters wanted the death penalty to stay in place. The passing of this proposition brought changes in the death penalty procedure by speeding up the appeals process by establishing a time for death penalty review.

"The campaign in 2016 was very effective in the sense that voters were targeted, by bringing up examples of horrible crimes," Baldassare said. "Voters are always more likely to vote 'no' than 'yes.'"

Michael Rushford of the pro-death penalty Criminal Justice Legal Foundation, said the PPIC poll results historically have been misleading since the survey only asked Californians what penalty they favored for "first-degree murder."

"They should have asked the right question: What should the penalty be for the worst of the worst murderers, not what it should be if they kill someone in a bar fight," Rushford said.

Along with law enforcement organizations, Rushford is looking into what options are available to challenge the governor's latest moratorium concerning executions.

The Republicans posted a video on Facebook featuring Mark Klass, the father of Polly Klass, who was raped and murdered in 1993. Her killer, Richard Allen Davis, is on death row.

"The death penalty now is all about Gavin Newsom and what a wonderful guy he is for sparing these poor men that just didn't get enough hugs from their moms and dads when they were little kids," Klaas says in the video.

A few weeks ago, Newsom signed an executive order that has given hope to the 737 death row inmates by canceling the execution of any inmate while he is in term until 2023. Newsom also ordered that the execution chamber in San Quentin State Prison not be used while also ending the use of lethal injection.

"My ultimate goal is to end the death penalty in California," Newsom said in his latest conference call with reporters.

VALLEY STAR | MICKIE SHAW

GRADUATION- Program Manager Roberto Guiterrez hands certificates to graduates.

# Hard hat graduates

**More students graduated from this academy winter session than any year.**

AIMEE MARTINEZ
STAFF WRITER

Twenty-one students graduated from the Manufacturing Academy March 20, the largest group the academy has ever had.

Families, friends and employers gathered in the newly renovated machine shop to watch the graduates as they received their certificates of completion and shook the hands of their instructors. Interim President Denise Nolden expressed her joy at being able to witness this academy's accomplishments.

"It's wonderful to meet the instructor and employers," Noldon said. "Send us more students. Tell others about us."

Program Manager Roberto Gutierrez and Dean of Adult/Community Education and Workforce Development Douglas Marriott conveyed pride in the graduates and congratulated them. Teachers gushed over classroom memories and the accomplishments of their students while giving them nuggets of advice. Three valedictorians reflected on their experiences with the academy.

"Everything is either born, grown or made," Valedictorian Tralia Evans said about the biggest lesson she had learned.

After the graduation ceremony, students were encouraged to network with the employers present. Many of the companies included: LMI Aerospace, Express Pros, Accurate Dial and Newsplate, MS Aerospace, DG Engineering and Synear.

"You guys are so lucky," said instructor Mark Maki. "You're being courted by companies."

A week after graduation, nine students were already hired, some waited for clearance on their background checks and others got interviewed. At the time of graduation, some students already had jobs, like George Shirinyan, who started work as an entry level CNC operator at LMS Aerospace five days later. His goal is to eventually become a programmer.

According to Gutierrez, 75 percent of graduates have a job or offer within a week. However, some students who apply to manufacturing companies around week four or five can secure work through a commitment before they graduate. Often employers will come and speak during training while simultaneously scoping out potential employees. Once a student has been hired, they can return to the academy and build upon their learning.

Those who enroll in the program receives funding from various sources including: The South Los Angeles UAW WorkSource Center, Antelope Valley Comprehensive AJCC (America's Job Center of California ), El Proyecto Del Barrio Youth Source Center, Los Angeles County Office of Education and Propel LA.

WorkSource Centers fund adults through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act from the Department of Labor. YouthSource centers fund high school dropouts and unemployed graduates through the Federal Workforce Investment Act and a $12 million grant from the U.S. Department of Labor's Workforce Innovation Fund.

The academy's previous record of graduates was made in 2017 with 14 students, according to LA Economic and Workforce Development Department.

"I thank God for this opportunity," said former student Alejandro Corado. "I thought there was no hope when I was unemployed."

## ON CAMPUS

### April 9

The Art Gallery continues its exhibition, "Print as Protest," until May 2 in the Art Building.

### April 10

The One Book One College Program is presenting a screening of "Worlds of Ursula K. Le Guin" at 1:30 p.m. in Music Recital Hall 106.

### April 13

The Commercial Music Department is having a Career Day in Recital Hall 106 and Band Room 112 at 4 p.m., a meet and greet at 6:30 p.m. and a concert a 7 p.m.

### April 16

The Men's Baseball team will be playing a home game against Oxnard College at 2:30 p.m.

These features and more can be found in full @ www.thevalleystarnews.com

Follow up-to-date campus news and events on Twitter @ValleyStarNews

# New Zealand mass shooting goes live

**The southwestern Pacific Ocean country was rocked by a devastating terrorist attack that resulted in dozens of casualties.**

ALANA AIMAQ
STAFF WRITER

A terrorist attack at two New Zealand mosques left 50 people dead and dozens injured March 15 as a white supremacist live-streamedhis murder spree to the world on Facebook.

The deadliest shooting in modern New Zealand history according to multiple sources leaves the country shocked and eager to find out what will happen next.

The first half of the attack occurred at the Masjid Al Noor Mosque, where the self-proclaimed white supremacist used an automatic rifle to shoot down worshippers. He then got into his car, screamed "I am the god of hellfire," and drove off to the Linwood mosque where he proceeded to kill seven victims.

Three other suspects were initially detained but are still under investigation, CNN stated. Before March 15, the deadliest shooting in New Zealand was 30 years ago, where a gunman shot and killed 13 people after an argument with a neighbor.

The shooting was broadcasted on Facebook Live and re-uploaded to sites including YouTube and Twitter, where these mega platforms were left scrambling to delete any footage of the attack. According to KTLA, the gunman aired 17 minutes of graphic content of him shooting the innocent victims.

YouTube's chief product officer Neal Mohan announced that moderators worked overnight to take down tens of thousands of videos containing footage of the ambush, and are still dealing with an "unprecedented volume" of videos. Around 1.5 million videos were taken down from Facebook as well just 24 hours after the mass murder, stated the Washington Post.

The 28-year-old had a history of promoting radical ideas and his behavior was nothing out of the ordinary. He had been a member of the Bruce Rifle Club, and was typically found visiting the range alone, the club's Vice President Scott Williams explained to the New York Times. In 2017, a former New Zealand military member Pete Breidahl reported the perpetrator's mental stability to the club.

"They wore camo around the range, like they were living some military base fantasy," he stated.

Filled with anti-muslim rhetoric, the suspect's 87-page manifesto was sent to the New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Arden within minutes before the attack began, CNN explained. The proclamation that was sent to the generic email account managed by staff was looked over as another email in the shuffle.

In this manifesto, the shooter described U.S. President Donald Trump as "a symbol of renewed white identity," KTLA stated. His white-supremacist-filled document discussed his beliefs, plans and reasoning behind the attacks, as told by Vox.

After the New York Times explained how the suspect bought four firearms legally with a licence, citizens wonder what measures parliament will be taking.

New Zealand's Prime Minister announced to ABC just five days after the attack that assault rifles will be officially banned from the country once it is approved by legislators.

"Today I am announcing that New Zealand will ban all military-style semi-automatic weapons," Arden said."We will also ban all assault rifles. We will also ban all high capacity magazines. We will ban all parts with the ability to convert semi-automatic or any other type of firearm into a military style semi-automatic weapon."

As a country with loose gun laws, KTLA explained that despite the low homicide rates, roughly one out of every three people own a gun.

In a video from Time where Arden talked to New Zealand's parliament, she spelled out her concerns about popularizing the shooter's name and bringing their actions into the public eye.

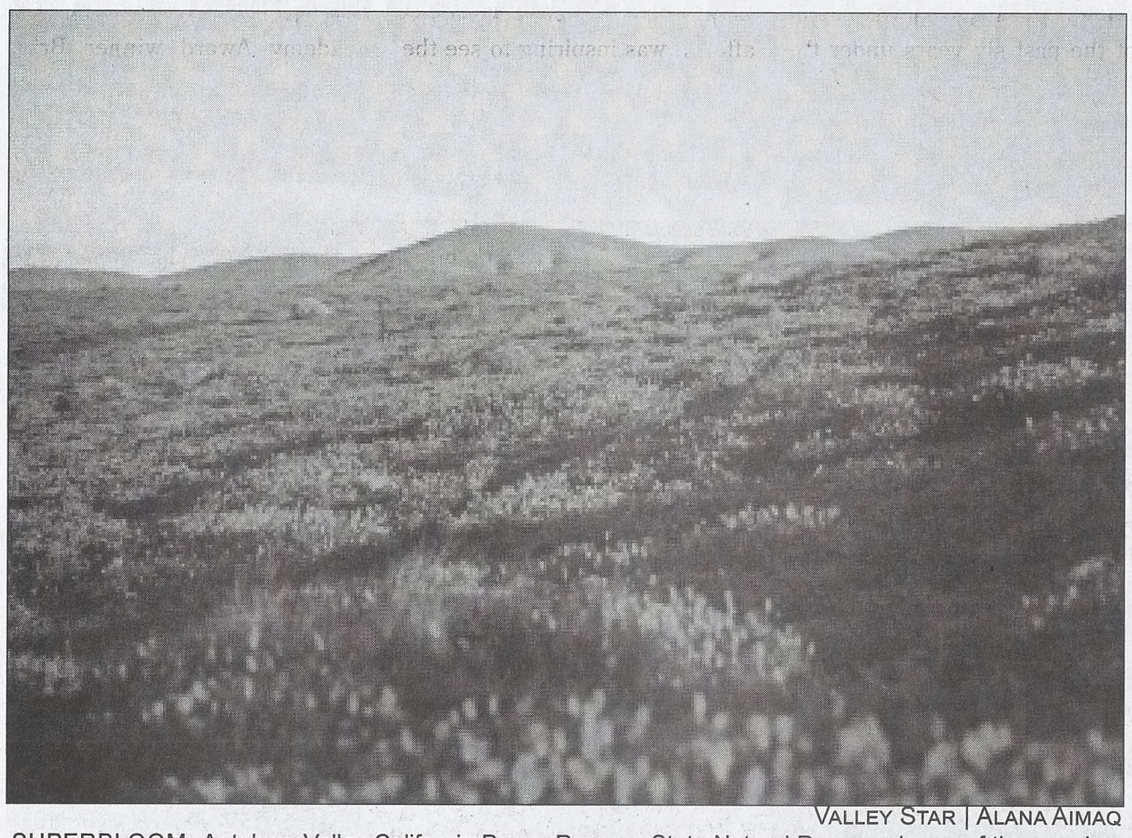
"We need to acknowledge and do what we can to prevent the notoriety that this individual seeks … One thing I can assure you, you won't hear me speak his name."

FLICKR | JEFFREY OF CHRISTCHURCH NEW ZEALAND

SADNESS- State flag flies at half-mast as the country mourns after largest mass shooting.

# Super bloom makes for popping poppies season

**The California super bloom is back and bigger than ever thanks to plently of rainfall throughout the year.**



VALLEY STAR | ALANA AIMAQ

SUPERBLOOM- Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve State Natural Reserve, home of the poppies.

TATE COAN
ONLINE EDITOR

Usually California super blooms happen once in a decade, but this is the second one in three years and now they can even be seen from space.

Considering the droughts California often experiences, multiple super blooms in such a short time-frame are highly unusual but thanks to the United States' wettest winter on record, the Golden State is drenched with color.

NASA noticed an explosion of wildflowers within the west-coast state and DigitalGlobe satellites were able to capture high resolution images of the blooms.

"The colorful satellite imagery shows the hillsides along Walker Canyon, filled with blooming poppies as well as hundreds of cars parked nearby and people hiking along trails in the area," said a DigitalGlobe representative.

The abundance of precipitation broke the state out of its near 8-year drought, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor, and locals are taking advantage of the colorful new backdrop.

As the captivating blooms takeover the mountains, they also takeover news feeds and homepages. Eager sightseers sit and pose surrounded by the vibrant flora of SoCal in their latest posts. Over 150,000 pictures are tagged #superbloom depicting the painted California fields on instagram, but many fear a negative outcome for the flowers with all the added attention.

"Look at those people. They're stepping all over the poppies," said Randy Solis, a Riverside County Habitat Conservation Agency patrol officer. "The people are nice — except when they're fighting about poppies."

The California Department of Parks and Recreation encourage visitors to not step on or sit on the flowers due to the potential damage it can cause to the fields. Packing down the soil by adding a person's body weight to the land can leave the dirt lifeless for the next few years to come.

With over 140,000 visitors to Anza-Borrego Desert State Park during the smaller superbloom of 2017, wildflower onlookers can expect large crowds, long lines and weekend traffic jams.

The super bloom can be seen at most California state parks like Griffith Park, The Antelope Valley Poppy Reserve, Malibu Creek State Park and Joshua Tree.

With millions bright blooming flowers, California is wrapping up their heavy winter rains with a rainbow.

More about the Bloom on page 6

# Nielsen loses rating with president and forced to resign

**After a turbulent year of being the face of a controversial border policy, Kristen Nielson resigns as Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security.**

SOLOMON SMITH
MANAGING EDITOR

President Donald Trump announced the resignation of Kristjen Nielsen from the office of Homeland Security on twitter Sunday amid clashes over the crisis at the border.

"Secretary of Homeland Security Kristjen Nielsen will be leaving her position, and I would like to thank her for her service," wrote Trump on Twitter.

According to sources at CNN, Nielsen was not expected to resign Sunday and was on her way to meet with the president to discuss her agenda. The meeting was scheduled for 5 p.m. at the White House, and Nielsen had been, according to sources, blindsided by the president's request for her resignation. Several persons familiar with Nielson, according to the New York Times, mentioned that Nielson had a prepared letter drafted at the ready.

"I hereby resign from the position of Secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), effective April 7th 2019," read Nielsen's resignation letter. "Despite our progress in reforming homeland security for a new age, I have determined that it is the right time for me to step aside."

In recent months, the president had asked Nielson to close the southern border and bar entry to asylum seekers, most of whom come from Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala through Mexico. Nielson had been working on garnering support from the three countries when Trump announced that he would be cutting aid to them, sending mixed messages. She also stated that closing the southern border entry ports and turning away asylum seekers would not help the situation and would be illegal as asylum seekers had a right to enter the country according to American and international law, according to the New York Times.

Nielson was a staunch defender of the policy to separate families at the border, instituted by the president through a memo from her office publicly, but privately many sources close to her say she waited for weeks to draft the memo as reported in an article from the New York Times. In a meeting with congress, she defended the family separation policy while simultaneously refusing to acknowledge that children were kept in cages or that the policy was a policy, as opposed to a law. The disagreements in policy between her and the president led to her outing, according to some insiders, as Trump wanted someone more extreme.

**"It is deeply alarming that the Trump Administration official who put children in cages is reportedly resigning because she is not extreme enough for the White House's liking."**

*-Nancy Pelosi*

"It is deeply alarming that the Trump Administration official who put children in cages is reportedly resigning because she is not extreme enough for the White House's liking," said House Speaker Nancy Pelosi in a statement released in response to her resignation.

Trump has temporarily placed Kevin McAleenan, the commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection, as the temporary replacement for Nielsen. In a tweet, Nielsen has said that she will remain to guide the next leader of the department.

"I have agreed to stay on as secretary through Wednesday, April 10th to assist with an orderly transition and ensure that key DHS missions are not impacted."

# VALLEY LIFE



## U-Pass or no pass?

**Valley College students will decide whether they want to pay a fee for a subsidized Metro pass in the upcoming spring elections.**

GABRIEL ARIZON
CO-EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The upcoming ASU spring elections will include a transportation fee referendum that will offer a subsidized Metro U-Pass.

In a March 12 Executive Meeting, the ASU approved a referendum that will ask students to vote on a $13 Metro train/bus pass. The cost would be on top of the health fee students already pay. The pass would last per semester — $8 for the winter and summer semesters — and would feature an unlimited number of rides. It will need a majority of "yes" votes to be approved.

"I think it would be very beneficial for students, like me, who are not getting financial aid," nursing major Samantha Menendez said.

If approved, every Valley College student will be paying for a pass each semester, regardless of their need or usage of it, and there will be no opt-out option. All credit students will be eligible to get one.

A 30-day Metro pass costs $100. Students can buy a monthly $43 pass, but must provide proof of enrollment in an accredited school and are required to be enrolled in a minimum of 12 units for three months. Los Angeles Mission College and LA Trade Tech College each offer their own U-Pass that lasts around a semester, but they cost $135 and $156, respectively, since they are not subsidized.

Besides Valley, LA City College, East College, Mission and Trade Tech are all including a similar referendum in their student elections as well.

According to Dean of Student Life Elizabeth Negrete, a study showed that 19.1 percent of Valley students take the bus and train, while 63 percent use a car (includes whether they drive, carpool or use an Uber/Lyft). Nearly 24 percent said they would take a bus or train if a pass was offered at a reduced price, however.

"My concern is we have a low voter turnout; that whatever decision is made, is going to be determined by a very small group of students," Dean Negrete said. "I think overall, it's a good thing to have students pay such a low fee for transportation, but I would understand the other side."

"I think it's a good idea, since some students live pretty far from school and are late to classes," biology major Astrid Cortez said.

The ASU elections start April 22 and run until April 29. Students will be able to vote either on campus or online. If approved, the program is set to last for three years.

FLICKR | JONATHAN RILEY
METRO- A referendum in the spring elections will ask students if they would pay $13 for a Metro U-Pass.

## A bumpy takeoff for Marvel

**The titular "Captain Marvel" is witty and funny, though her feature film does not soar to grand heights.**

AIMEE MARTINEZ
STAFF WRITER

As a precursor to "Avengers: Endgame," we are presented with "Captain Marvel" just in time to know the character so suspensefully alluded to at the end of "Avengers: Infinity War."

The film opens with a close up of Carol Danvers bleeding blue as she dreams of a memory where a former Air Force colleague reappears. According to mentor Yon-Rogg (Jude Law), this dream is a sign that her emotions are once again prohibiting her from unlocking her true potential. Unfortunately, the movie didn't quite hit its true potential either.

The movie takes place in 1995, when spy organization SHIELD is just beginning and Nick Fury (Samuel L. Jackson) still has both eyes. The film journeys through the present and past of former Air Force officer Carol Danvers (Brie Larson) as she discovers who she is and who she was with the accompaniment of Garbage, No Doubt and Nirvana in true 90s fashion.

With her memories scattered, Danver's identity of being an honorable warrior of the technologically advanced and militaristic Kree rely on the events of the past six years under the tutelage of Yon-Rogg. Caught amidst a battle of two alien races — Kree and Skrull — Danvers becomes perhaps the strongest Avenger as she comes to grips with her humanity.

The movie's fast-paced sequences left some information to be desired, and caused twists and problems to be so lightweight; the audience barely had time to process the emotions before it was gone in the blink of an eye. As Danvers struggles to regain her memories, there are moments where she does not remember people at all. Then in the next scene, she is reminiscing with her best friend about the good times; memories easily flooding in to complete the conversation without letting the audience in on what's happening inside her head.

Captain Marvel, from her goblin-green suit into a patriotic red and blue, displayed heroism both in her life before Kree and after. It was inspiring to see the strength in Danvers, not only in her newfound powers, but in her history with becoming a skilled pilot despite the discouragement of many who told her she was too emotional. Her spunk, wit and amusing banter made her a particularly delightful character to watch.

There was a good balance between comedy and drama. The chummy relationship between Danvers and Fury was amusing. It showed Fury in a much softer light before the hardening of intergalactic wars.

The characters had interesting storylines which, unfortunately, were executed in mediocre fashion. The villain had little screen time, diminishing any animosity we could have felt for the character. Danver's role among the Kree was not delved into as much as it should have been. In a film that contained Academy Award nominees Jude Law and Annette Benning and Academy Award winner Brie Larson, it was a shame to see their talents squandered.

The film itself was enjoyable, but it was definitely not Marvel's best. However, if the Marvel Universe has any chance of defeating Thanos, it's going to be with Captain Marvel.

**VALLEY'S STARS**

★★★½

Rated PG-13
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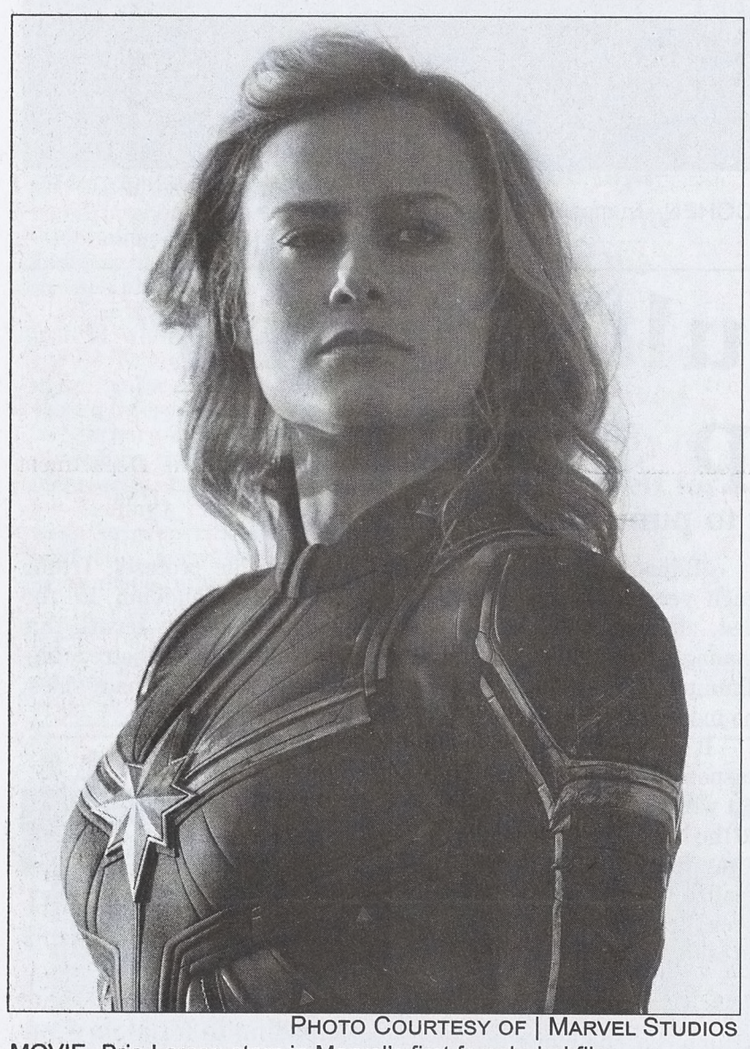


PHOTO COURTESY OF | MARVEL STUDIOS
MOVIE- Brie Larson stars in Marvel's first female-led film.

## Fixed lights, less tickets

**The YDSA, DSA and volunteers held a free brake light repair clinic for any driver passing by the Valley College campus.**

GABRIEL ARIZON
CO-EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The Youth Democratic Socialist Club assembled in a Valley College parking lot one Saturday morning to repair drivers' brake lights for free.

"We do this because this falls under mutual aid," YDSA Secretary Ivan Nathan said. "Mutual aid is basically the concept of, 'I help you, and that improves society; you help another person, and that improves society.' So we are all trying to help each other so that society can move forward."

Members of the YDSA and other volunteers met in Lot B around 8 a.m on March 30. They set up tents and signs near the corner of Oxnard Street and Fulton Avenue, and waited for any passing driver to stop by that needed brake light repairs or replacements. At the end of the seven-hour event, the group had serviced 23 cars with approximately 30 volunteers appearing throughout the day.

No appointment was necessary for the event, and drivers did not have to pay a fee for any of the services. According to AutoGuru, "the average price for tail light lens replacement starts at $165 and goes to $750 and beyond."

After signing a waiver, drivers could chat with YDSA and Democratic Socialist of America (DSA) members there, as well as have rice, beans and vegetable stew provided by Food not Bombs — a loose-knit group of independent collectives that uses donated food (primarily from the farmers' market) to feed others.

"It was really nice that they could do this for free," Melissa Zavala said. "I think more people should do this."

Planning for the event had started since last semester, though some issues arose during that phase that caused progress in certain periods to be stagnant — the main one being where the group would get their insurance.

"We have insurance under our organization, which is like $3 million, because it's a cross-country organization," Nathan said, "but you are required to have insurance. I don't remember how much you need, I think they needed at least $500,000. So if want to do an event like this, you have to have some backing."

The group partially funded the supplies — including for tools and brake light replacements — from dues paid by their members. The cost of the supplies was around $150.

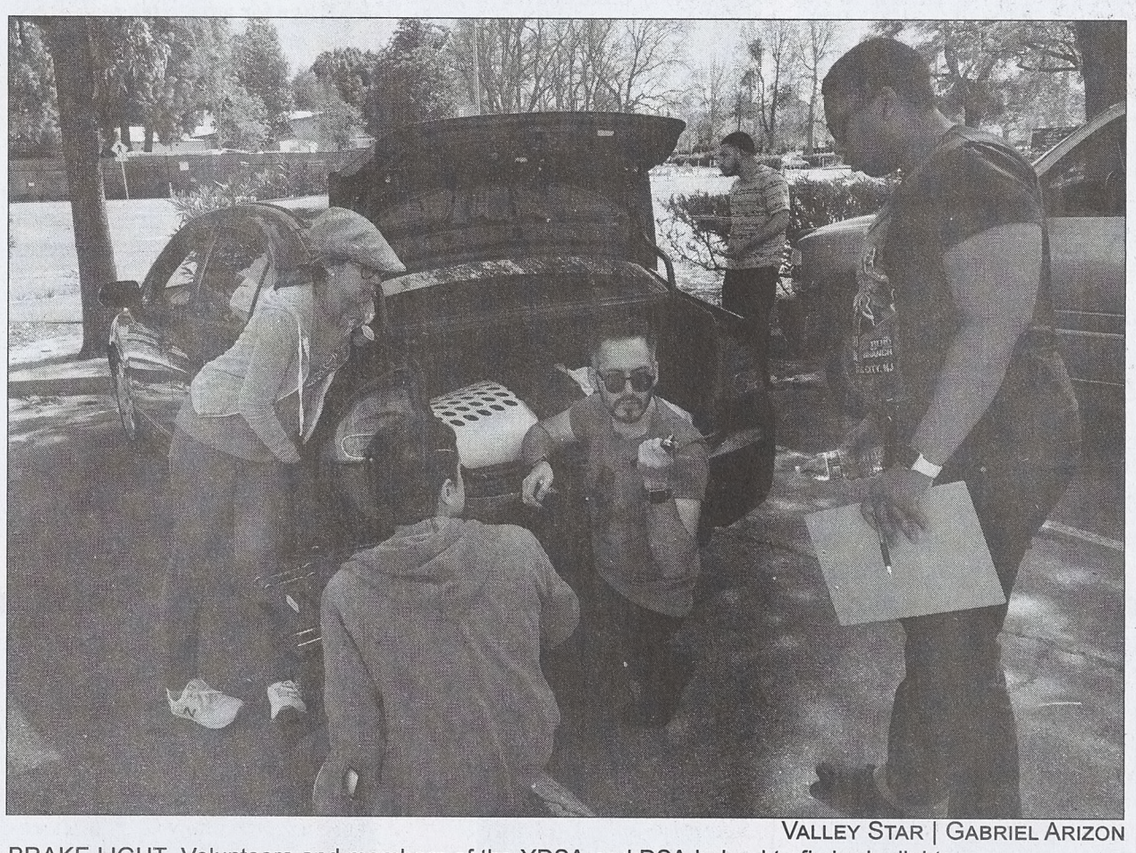
Beyond helping others and promoting the DSA, the event was also used to help prevent people (more specifically those of color) from being pulled over by the police.

"With brake lights, there's a big discrepancy with people of color, and when you get pulled over for brake lights, they'll look for another thing to screw with you," Nathan said. "It'll just rack up and rack up, and it's overwhelmingly ... people of color."

"Don't give police a reason to pull you over," driver Anthony Orendorff said. "If everything is in check, it's their fault."

According to a 2018 Bureau of Justice Statistics report, drivers who were white were less likely to receive a ticket and more likely to get a warning than Hispanic and black drivers. Additionally, Hispanics were less likely than white and black drivers to be let go without enforcement action following a traffic stop.

The DSA has done events like this before across the country — two of them taking place in Los Angeles (one of them had over 100 drivers stop by). Nathan said that they hope to get the resources to do this once a month, but said they want to improve on getting more time to put the message out. A similar event is being planned for May, though a time and place has yet to be determined.



VALLEY STAR | GABRIEL ARIZON
BRAKE LIGHT- Volunteers and members of the YDSA and DSA helped to fix brake lights.

# OPINION

## In search for the truth: Cohen speaks out against Trump

**Michael Cohen's Congressional Testimony may have not gone as planned, but it sparked many larger conversations and investigations.**

MEG TAYLOR
NEWS EDITOR

Many people hoped Michael Cohen's testimony before the House Oversight Committee would uncover damning evidence about Donald Trump. The reality of the trial– Republicans repeatedly attacked Cohen's character and ignored all the evidence implicating the president; however, the trial successfully opened the nation to a discussion on becoming more civilized not only in government but to each other.

Cohen accused the president of having knowledge of the WikiLeaks email dump on Hillary Clinton during the 2016 election. Trump's former personal attorney also admitted to lying on behalf of the president (regarding negotiations of Trump Tower Moscow, among other things) and violating campaign finance laws. Cohen's sole purpose of testifying was to expose Trump for the racist, conman, and cheat that he is; he needed a safe platform to do so.

"Ladies and gentleman, we are in search of the truth. The president has made many statements of his own, and now the American people have a right to hear the other side. They can watch Mr. Cohen's testimony and make their own judgement," said Chairman Elijah Cummings. "Today is deeply disturbing and it should be troubling to all Americans ... The days of this committee protecting the president at all costs are over."

To combat the evidence presented during the trial–such as the check signed by the president and addressed to Cohen to reimburse him for the Stormy Daniels hush-money payoff– Republicans continually tried to obliterate Cohen's credibility. Their favorite tactic utilized was name calling; they referred to Cohen as a convicted liar and a felon who is going to prison for lying to Congress.

The hearing lasted roughly seven and a half hours. What was supposed to be a hearing to give Cohen the opportunity to voice his side of the story turned into a bashing not only of Cohen but of party members. Cummings' final statement encompassed Cohen's personal suffering and crimes together with the suffering of the nation and the malpractice of those currently in power.

"We are better than this. We really are, as a country, we are so much better than this," said Cummings. He then addressed Cohen directly: "I want to first of all thank you. I know that this has been hard. I know that you've faced a lot. I know that you are worried about your family. But this is a part of your destiny. And hopefully this portion of your destiny will lead to a better Michael Cohen, a better Donald Trump, a better United States of America, and a better world."

This final statement received praise and recognition from people worldwide. However, Cummings missed the point that discourse has been here before and we moved away from it. John W. Dean testified against President Richard Nixon in 1973. Dean was the first administration official to accuse Nixon of direct involvement with Watergate and the resulting cover-up in press interviews.

This is a direct parallel to Cohen; he is the first person to take the stand and publicly testify against Trump regarding the WikiLeaks drop and relationship with Russia. The common denominator between the two cases – Dean and Cohen both challenged authoritarian presidents by revealing their lies and abuses of power. While Republicans did their best to discredit Cohen, they thankfully did not undermine him enough to negate the concrete evidence provided in his testimony.

The most important lesson from this testimony is that we need to be more honest and humane with one another, regardless of political party, race, gender, or any other social construct. The only way to ensure a brighter future for this country is to uplift one another instead of tearing each other down. All the time and energy wasted on pointless jabs and arguments between parties could have been put towards creating substantial change to benefit future generations.

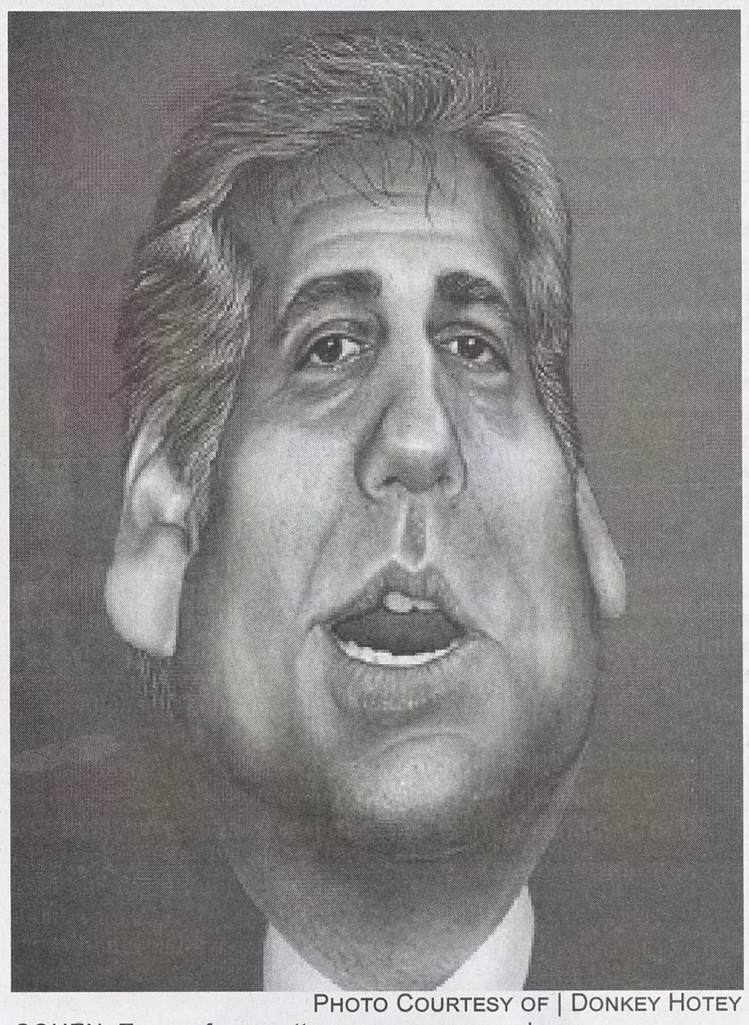


PHOTO COURTESY OF | DONKEY HOTEY
COHEN- Trumps former attorny comes comes clean.

## Paul Manafort sentenced to 7.5 years in prison

**Trump's former campaign chairman getting exactly what he deserves, extra jail time for all his crimes.**

MEG TAYLOR
NEWS EDITOR

Judge Amy Berman Jackson ordered Paul Manafort to serve a total of 7.5 years in a federal penitentiary and justice could not get any sweeter.

President Donald Trump's former campaign chairman received an additional 43 months in prison on top of a 47-month sentence he already received for financial convictions from a jury in Virginia. This substantial sentence is fitting to the charges against him: conspiracy against the U.S. and conspiracy witness tampering. Manafort was ungrateful and tried to play the victim — sitting in a wheelchair — pleading to the judge for leniency.

"Your honor, I will be 70 years old in a few weeks," said Manafort. "Please let my wife and I be together."

Thankfully, Judge Jackson fired back at this ridiculous plea. "Saying I'm sorry I got caught is not an inspiring plea for leniency."

This is a prime example of members of Trump's administration thinking they can buy and pardon their way out of anything– the Stormy Daniels' hush money payoff, Trump using $258,000 from his charity to settle legal problems, granting clemency to nine people so far-- just to name a few.

"This President has set a new standard in politics which is that you can lie your butt off and it's okay, and that's a dangerous standard," said Chris Cuomo in a one-on-one debate with Kellyanne Conway on CNN.

Following Judge Jackson's sentencing, the state of New York charged Manafort with 16 crimes that, if convicted, Trump cannot pardon. The pardon proof indictment on Manafort consists of charges in a mortgage fraud case. This is important because even if Trump could pardon Manafort on a federal level, he could not pardon these state charges.

When asked about the additional charges against Manafort, Trump pretended to be completely unaware of the news.

"I don't know about that. Are they going after him for state taxes?" said Trump. "I don't know anything about it, I haven't heard that. I'll take a look at it."

These state charges are crucial in the grand scheme of impeaching Trump. Hopefully, this sends a message to the others indicted that they are not "pardon proof" and should cooperate instead of continuing to blindly defend Trump.

## Berkeley assault causes another Trump tantrum

**Donald Trump is exploiting a victim of assault to punish liberals.**

TATE COAN
ONLINE EDITOR

President Donald Trump and his supporters ignorantly claim that UC Berkeley does not support the First Amendment after a conservative activist was assaulted on campus.

Activist Hayden Williams was recruiting new members for Turning Point USA, a conservative group, on Berkeley's campus when he was assaulted by a non-Berkeley student last month, according to The Washington Post. Trump is using the attack on Williams as leverage for a possible new executive order to defund the entire left-leaning school.

"Today I am proud to announce that I will very soon be signing an executive order requiring colleges and universities to support free speech if they want federal research [funds]," said Trump during his CPAC speech.

A common theme in Trump's presidency is his clear misunderstanding of the First Amendment, which states that, "Congress shall make no law abridging the freedom of speech," meaning that the government or institutions it funds, such as UC Berkeley, cannot legally punish someone because of an expressed opinion. Unless the person who attacked Williams was a UC Berkeley representative working on behalf of the institution, then the executive order would have affected nothing.

Turning Point USA is known for attempting to start a political revolution on college campuses by financially fueling right-leaning candidates in student government elections. They also have maintained Professor Watchlist, a website used to discredit college instructors who've allegedly discriminated against conservative students by discussing things like 'fragile masculinity'; a soft spot for Trump supporters.

Trump thinks that because a fight broke out on a liberal campus that the government should just take away the school's federal research funds because he supports the person that was punched. This shines a light on another theme in Trump's presidency: confusing a democracy for a dictatorship.

He preached a similar message on Twitter when he threatened to pull federal funds from California in response to the wildfires that took over 80 lives back in November.

"Billions of dollars are given each year, with so many lives lost, all because of gross mismanagement of the forests," Trump ranted. "Remedy now, or no more Fed payments!"

It seems odd that his response to California's deadliest wildfire in history, according to the New York Times, is to take away federal funding until you realize that he lost California by over 3 million votes in the 2016 Presidential Election.

As California has consistently expressed their detest for Trump, he continues to threaten to use his federal power to impair them. While the assault against Williams was wrong, Trump did not put forth the same efforts when Heather Heyer was murdered at the protests in Charlottesville in 2017. Heyer was with a group protesting a Unite the Right rally which ended up attracting KKK members, neo-Nazis and gun-nuts, when a man drove through a crowd of people, hitting and killing Heyer. If Trump fans didn't consist of many KKK members neo-Nazis and gun-nuts maybe he would have spoken as negatively about the people at the Unite the Right Rally as he does about women.

When addressing the Charlottesville protests, Trump stated, "We condemn in the strongest possible terms this egregious display of hatred, bigotry and violence on many sides, on many sides."

**THE ISSUE**

### Sexual assault on college campus

According to Rainn.org, an anti-sexual violence organization, women ages 18-24 "are at an elevated risk of sexual violence."

11.2 percent of all students expereince rape of sexual assault through physical force, or incapacitation (among all undergraduate and graduate students).

## VALLEY VIEW | ARE YOU FOR OR AGAINST THE DEATH PENALTY?

*TEXT BY ALANA AIMAQ | PHOTOS BY APET SUKIASYAN*

"It depends on what the crime was."

-LISA CHON, NURSING

"It has to be a case by case basis. People will always be split on that."

-J.J. MARIN, BUSINESS

"I guess i'm for but it depends on how bad the crime was. I'm pretty conservative, but with the times changing, it just depends."

-ERICA MADLANGSAKAY

"When you make the penalty for a crime execution, there's no way to go back and undo it if you find that person has been unjustly convicted."

DELORIAN THOMAS

"If it's a serial killer, sure, but most of the time, it's not like that."

- ASH ABREU, FASHION DESIGN

## EDITORS NOTE

The views expressed on this page are solely those of the writer and do not necessarily reflect those of the Valley Star, its instructors, editors, staff or those of Los Angeles Valley College, its administration, faculty, staff or students.

# SPORTS



## Keeling didn't let elbow issues get in his way

**Sophomore Alec Keeling is playing his final season at Valley college after four surgeries due to a torn UCL and a misplaced nerve during surgery in 2013.**

SPECIAL TO THE STAR | DALE BECK

KEELING - Alec Keeling attemps to steal second base against Imperial Valley at a home game, Valley won the game 15-6.

JOSEPH GONZALEZ
STAFF WRITER

Utility player Alec Keeling has faced tremendous adversity throughout the years after undergoing surgery four times to repair his ulnar collateral ligament in his right elbow.

The first torn UCL occurred in 2013, while Keeling was pitching for Valley in a winter scrimmage game. He had Tommy John surgery to repair the UCL in February 2014. After the first procedure, the nerve was placed incorrectly, causing discomfort for Keeling's elbow. He underwent surgery twice within the next two years to relieve the nerve displacement.

"I was 18 and dumbstruck because you don't think you're going to get injured when you're playing," sophomore Keeling said. "It also didn't help, but at the time I was a little punk coming out of high school full steam ahead."

**"After the injuries, it made me and taught me how everyday is blessing. Each day I'm always given an opportunity to improve myself for tomorrow."**

*-Alec Keeling*

Two years after his first injury, Keeling was able to take the field again as a Monarch to complete his comeback. His first appearance in two years came against Compton College on Jan 27. He would go on to pitch that season for the Monarchs, coming out of the bullpen as a relievers.

"After the injuries, it made me and taught me how everyday is a blessing. Each day I'm always given an opportunity to improve myself for tomorrow," Keeling said. "I learned to slow down my perception of time and to appreciate the life I have on this earth."

The road to recovery was not easy, as he took on many obstacles to get healthy. An UCL injury recovery time is 12-15 months. Not seeing results overnight is something Keeling knew to expect. He would do anything in his control to tackle the recovery and be in control of it. Along that journey he found out he needed patience to help himself and not rush things.

"After I knew I tore my ligament, I researched and did my homework to learn everything to know about the procedure and how to best treat my body to maximize the best recovery," Keeling said. "Everything was so sped up and I was so unsure before my injuries, the physical therapy made me realize I was struggling in many other places."

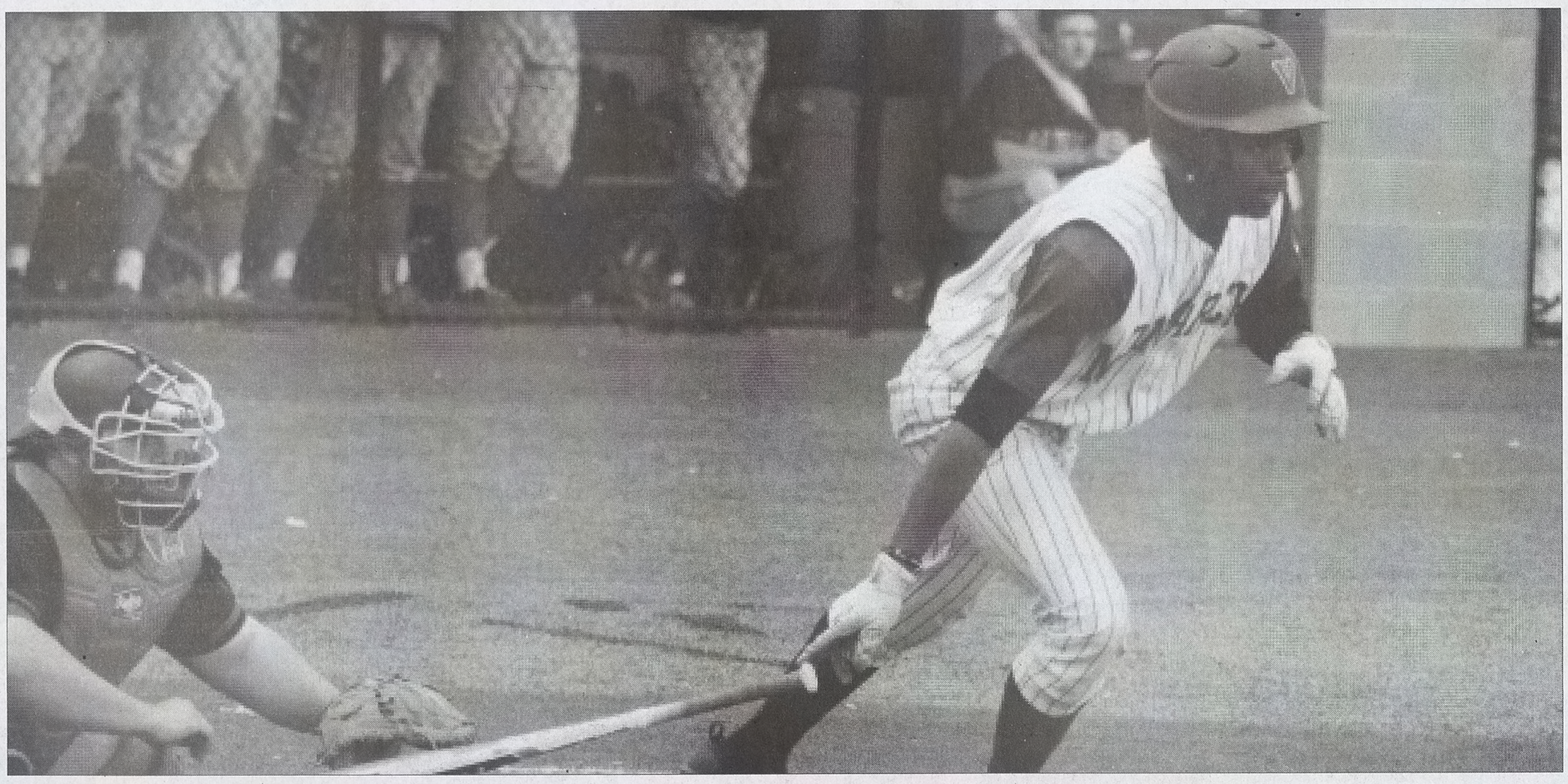
Grinding through physical therapy is something Keeling did to heal and make his elbow 100 percent, but one thing he did not realize was how strong this injury made him mentally. He grew as a human being and learned about himself, his priorities and became a better student, not just a better player.

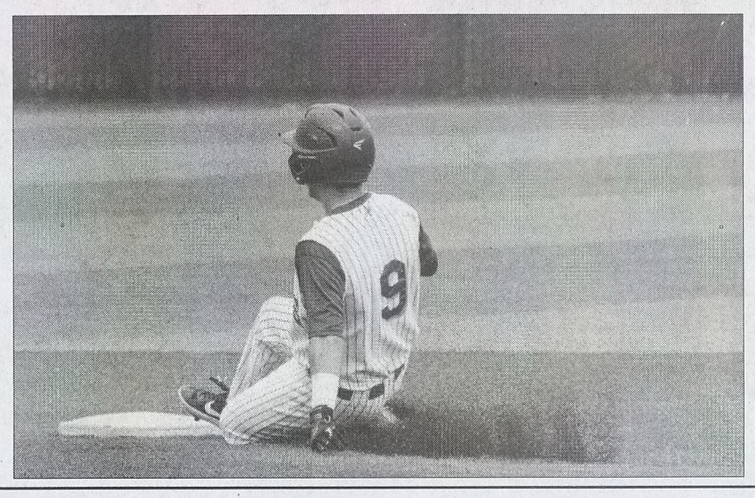
"Another challenge as a student athlete was to stay focused on my grades when I was going through physical therapy," Keeling said. "Sometimes you get so focused on the how your recovery is going you can easily forget about a couple readings or assignments."

Experiencing this injury brought a great and positive mindset for Keeling. He wants to shine down on his teammates and be a great role model to them. Motivating others through his words and actions is something he hopes he can accomplish for his team this 2019 season.

"One of the biggest challenges is to make sure I don't let my team down by letting my setbacks affect my role as a teammate,"said Keeling. "There are some teammates that right out of high school, or some who are dealing with other personal matters, so I must make sure I'm a positive role model in a way. Whether if it's baseball related or to help my teammates out, if they have questions about a class."

## Men's Monarchs get huge win over Pierce





SPECIAL TO THE STAR | DALE BECK

TOP -Monach batter drops his bat as he makes his way to first base.

BOTTOM RIGHT- the Monarchs celebrate a big win 15-1 agianst Pierce College at home.

BOTTOM LEFT- Giovanni Chaidez slides into base safely getting ready to score another monarch run.


**The Valley Star**

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Letters to the editor can be sent to: editor@lavalleystar.com or submitted online at www.lavalleystar.com. Letters must be limited to 300 words and may be edited for content. Full name and contact information must be supplied in order for letters to be printed. Send by Thursday for the following week's issue.

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# Super bloom brings color to California parks and Coast

The Superbloom is a rare occurance that happens about once every five years, but in the last decade they have been much more frequent. The colorful display is usually headlined by the California Poppy, but the bloom occurs all over the state. Here are a few photos that show some of the less well-known blooms that are just as colorful.

These photos were taken at Crystal Cove State Park and the Castaic Lake area. As viewers enjoy the flowers they can also check out these other popular spots which are part of the California ecosystem.

*Text and photos by Solomons Smith, Photo Editor*

RIGHT- A flowered path near Castaic Lake.

BELOW RIGHT- Close up of blue wildflowers at Castaic Lake.

TOP- Lush fields of bright yellow Bush Sunflowers grow wild along the California coast near Crystal Cove.

ABOVE- A photographer takes video of the bush sunflowers along a flowered path on the way to the beach.

ABOVE- Purple wild flowers grow along a sand dune at Crystal Cove.

ABOVE- A park bench faces the ocean along a scenic foot path surrounded by wild flowers.